

R381-70-21. ANIMALS.

This section consists of the rules and supporting information pertaining to animals that are in a child care setting. The rules apply if any animals are regularly allowed on the premises whether or not the animals belong to the provider.

The risk of injury, infection, and aggravation of allergy from contact between children and animals is significant. The staff must plan carefully when having an animal in the facility and when visiting a zoo or local pet store (5,9,10). Children should be brought into direct contact only with animals known to be friendly and comfortable in the company of children. CFOC 4th ed. Standard 3.4.2.1 p.p. 129.

(1) The provider shall inform parents of the kinds of animals allowed at the facility.

Rationale/Explanation

Bringing animals and children together has both risks and benefits. Animals teach children about how to be gentle and responsible, about life and death, and about unconditional love. Nevertheless, animals can pose serious health and safety risks. CFOC 4th ed. Standard 3.4.2.1 p.p. 129.

Compliance Guidelines

The provider must inform parents of animals that are on the premises on a regular basis even when the animal does not reside at the facility. For example, if the provider chooses to feed a stray animal or takes care of any animal at the facility, the provider must notify parents of the animal's presence.

Risk Level

Low

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning

(2) The provider shall ensure that there is no animal on the premises that:

- (a) is naturally aggressive;**
- (b) has a history of dangerous, attacking, or aggressive behavior; or**
- (c) has a history of biting even one individual.**

Rationale/Explanation

The risk of injury, infection, and aggravation of allergy from contact between children and animals is significant. The staff must plan carefully when having an animal in the facility and when visiting a zoo or local pet store. Children should be brought into direct contact only with animals known to be friendly and comfortable in the company of children. Dog bites to children under four years of age usually occur at home, and the most common injury sites are the head, face, and neck. Many human illnesses can be acquired from animals. Many allergic children have symptoms when they are around animals. CFOC 4th ed. Standard 3.4.2.1 p.p. 129.

Compliance Guidelines

- Animals which are bred or trained to demonstrate aggression towards humans or other animals, or animals which have demonstrated aggressive behavior in the past, should not be at a child care facility.
- Aggressive animals are animals which are bred or trained to demonstrate aggression towards humans or other animals, or animals which have demonstrated such aggressive behavior in the past, may not be permitted on the grounds of the child care facility.
- Boa constrictors, anacondas, and most pythons are examples of naturally aggressive snakes and are very dangerous. They may not be on the premises.
- No animal that has bitten anyone or has a history of aggressive behavior may be on the premises whether or not they are kept in a cage, and whether or not they are vaccinated.
- Contact between animals and children should be supervised by a caregiver who is close enough to remove the child immediately if the animal shows signs of distress (e.g., growling, baring teeth, tail down, ears back) or the child shows signs of treating the animal inappropriately.

Risk Level

High

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Citation and CMP Warning

- (3) The provider shall ensure that animals at the facility are clean and free of obvious disease or health problems that could adversely affect children.**

Rationale/Explanation

Animals, including pets, are a source of illness for people, and people may be a source of illness for animals. Reptiles usually carry salmonella and pose a risk to children who are likely to put unwashed hands in their mouths. CFOC 4th ed. Standard 3.4.2.3 p.p. 130.

Animals can be entertaining and educational. But children, especially [children under 5 years of age](#), are more likely to get sick from germs animals can sometimes carry. Children can learn a lot from animals, and it's important to make sure they stay safe and healthy while they're learning. If

you plan to have an animal in your classroom, whether it's a class pet or for a hands-on learning experience, be aware of the risks and how to prevent illness. You can help kids enjoy and learn from animals while staying healthy. Visit [CDC: Animals in Schools and Daycares for more information.](#)

Compliance Guidelines

- Animals accessible to children should not be visibly dirty.
- Animals who are ill should be kept separate from children in care.

Risk Level

Low

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning

- (4) The provider shall ensure that there is no animal or animal equipment in food preparation or eating areas.

Rationale/Explanation

The food preparation area of the kitchen should be separate from eating, play, laundry, toilet, and bathroom areas and from areas where animals are permitted. CFOC 4th ed. Standard 4.8.0.1 p.p. 197.

Compliance Guidelines

- Animals and their equipment, such as food and water bowls, cat litter boxes, or dog beds, cannot be within 36 inches of food preparation or eating areas. All kitchen counters are considered to be food preparation areas.
- To determine if there is adequate space between animal equipment and food preparation and eating areas, a measurement is taken from the outermost edge of the food preparation or eating area to the outermost part of the animal equipment.
- This rule does not prohibit fish bowls or tanks in food preparation or eating areas. However, these habitats need to be well maintained because fish and their aquariums may carry germs.

Risk Level

Low

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning

- (5) If children help in the cleaning of animals or animal equipment, the provider shall ensure that the children wash their hands immediately after cleaning the animal or equipment.

Rationale/Explanation

The AAP and APHA suggest that caregivers instruct children on safe procedures to follow when cleaning animals or their equipment including:

- Use disposable gloves when cleaning animal equipment.
- Do not let children clean aquariums because contaminated water can splash into eyes and mouths.
- Do not dispose of used fish tank water in sinks used for getting drinking water or food preparation.
- Remove all animal waste and litter immediately from children's areas.
- Disinfect areas where equipment is cleaned after the cleaning activity is finished.

CFOC 4th ed. Standard 3.4.2.3 p.p. 130.

Risk Level

Low

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning

- (6) The provider shall ensure that children and staff wash their hands immediately after playing with or touching reptiles and amphibians.

Rationale/Explanation

Reptiles and amphibians are species known to carry salmonella. All persons who have contact with animals, animal products, or animal environments should wash their hands immediately after the contact. CFOC 4th ed. Standard 3.4.2.3 p.p. 131

Risk Level

Moderate

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Citation Warning

- (7) The provider shall ensure that dogs, cats, and ferrets that are housed at the facility have current rabies vaccinations.

Rationale/Explanation

Although the spread of diseases from animals to people is rare, pets do sometimes carry germs that can make people sick. Learn about the germs that animals in your facility can spread plus actions you can take that can help you and your pets stay healthy at [CDC: Pets and Other Animals](https://www.cdc.gov/pets/index.html).

Compliance Guidelines

This rule applies to dogs, cats, and ferrets that are repeatedly (more than one time) on the premises whether or not they belong to the provider. For example, if the provider takes care of an animal at the facility or chooses to feed a stray animal, that animal must have current rabies vaccinations.

Risk Level

Moderate

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Citation Warning

(8) The provider shall keep current animal vaccination records on-site for review by the department.

Rationale/Explanation

Vaccination records help the provider track and keep their animal's vaccinations current as well as provide proof that the provider is in compliance with licensing rules.

Compliance Guidelines

- An animal's veterinary tag is acceptable documentation as long as it has enough information to show that the animal's vaccinations are current.
- The provider does not need immunization records for animals that are brought in for show and tell.

Risk Level

Low

Corrective Action for 1st Instance

Warning